

REMARKS

In the Official Action of May 5, 2005, claim 26 was allowed.

Claims 1-2, 7-25 and 31-33 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Ames et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,543,106) in view of Klopfenstein et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,100,984). This ground of rejection is traversed.

Claim 1 has now been amended to incorporate the feature that the apparatus includes two or more side plates, with each side plate being disposed on a side of the feed tray and approximately parallel with the machine direction to inhibit the passage of air in a direction perpendicular to the machine direction. The Examiner has indicated that this feature allows the particulate matter to be more evenly distributed, as disclosed on page 41 of the specification, and is not disclosed in the prior art of record. Accordingly, applicant submits that claim 1, as well as those claims dependent thereon, are now in condition for allowance.

Claims 31-33 are now dependent on claim 26, which has been allowed. Accordingly, applicant submits that these claims are also allowable.

Claim 3 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Ames et al. in view of Klopfenstein et al. and further in view of Chmielewski (U.S. Patent No. 6,632,209). This ground of rejection is traversed.

Claim 3 is depended on claim 1, and applicant submits that this claim is now allowable for the reasons stated above in connection with claim 1.

Claims 4-6 also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Ames et al. in view of Klopfenstein et al. and further in view of Hansen (U.S. Patent No. 5,807,364). This ground of rejection is also traversed.

Claims 4-6 are dependent on claim 1. Accordingly, these claims are also allowable for the reasons presented above in connection with claim 1.

Claims 27-30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Ames et al. in view of Klopfenstein et al. and further in view of Jackson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,952,251). This ground of rejection is traversed.

Claims 27-30 have been amended to depend on claim 26. Accordingly, these

claims now depend on an allowed claim, and applicant submits that these claims are also allowable.

In view of the aforementioned facts and reasons, all pending claims are now deemed to be in proper condition for allowance. Entry of the foregoing amendment is deemed appropriate at this time since it serves to place all remaining claims in condition for allowance, and does not require any further search or consideration. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below to discuss any matter pertaining to the status of this application.

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Respectfully submitted,

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